

CHICAGO'S C.O.O.L. KIDS

The Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau opened its new on-site interactive teaching lab for school-age children in March: **Census Outreach Opportunities Lab (C.O.O.L.)**. The lab is a component of the Chicago Regional Office's Empowerment Zone Initiative. The activities in the lab will help the students to develop skills in mathematics, English, geography, civics, team building and much more. Additionally, they will learn how statistics are used to bring vital resources to their community in the areas of education, healthcare, childcare, housing and jobs.

The first participants to visit the lab were students from Farren School followed by Beethoven School two days later. The McCorkle School is scheduled to bring ninety students to the lab in April. At the end of the three-hour workshop, the students:

- Understood the census and survey process;
- Knew some of the statistics produced and why;
- Read census maps skillfully;
- Had the basic knowledge of how to develop a plan to bring activities for youth to their community; and,
- Received a personalized C.O.O.L. Kid Award certificate, a U.S. map with the state population total from Census 2000, and a giant-sized copy of ***Everybody Counts***.

Although the region's Partnership and Data Services Program administers the Empowerment Zone Initiative, the team of Supervisory Survey Statisticians serves as the primary instructors in the lab. They have joined their extensive mathematical background with the ingenuity of the automation team to create this program.

Students learn firsthand about the benefits of mathematics and geography in the nation's decision-making process. Students expressed that the experience made learning fun, especially math and geography.

Participating schools receive a C.O.O.L. School Award and teachers accompanying the students receive a C.O.O.L. Educator award.

Any school interested in participating in this project can call the U.S. Census Bureau at 708-531-9572 to receive an informational packet.